

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING**

**JUNE 3, 2010**

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The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00 pm in the Community Room of the North Haven Memorial Library, 17 Elm Street, North Haven, CT.

### **Members Present**

First Selectman, Michael J. Freda  
Second Selectman, Timothy M. Doheny  
Third Selectman, Stephen A. Fontana

Mr. Freda introduced himself and Selectmen Doheny and Fontana and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Public Comments Relative To The Agenda**

Pam Parella, Trumbull Place, Republican Registrar of Voters in North Haven announced her resignation from her position as registrar, and on Monday, June 7, 2010, Richard Werner, her Deputy, will take over the position. She was offered a spot on the ticket but chose to decline for personal reasons. She went on to say that she felt the timing was right because the State would be doing training on new software and she felt that whoever was taking her position should be the one trained. She assured the public that the Referendum has been worked on and is ready to go. She expressed her pleasure and honor to serve the public of North Haven and appreciated all the services of her fellow workers.

Gary Amato asked if regarding the item #9 on the agenda, the appointment of Elio Floriano as acting Building Inspector, was to take the place of Mr. Maiden. He asked if he was state licensed for the position. Mr. Freda replied yes. He then asked if Mr. Maiden was on paid leave or worker's compensation. Mr. Freda responded, paid leave.

Mr. Freda asked if there were any additional comments to the agenda, being none, he proceeded with the business of the meeting.

Mr. Doheny motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Board of Selectmen's Meeting of May 6, 2010.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

Mr. Fontana motioned to approve the minutes of the Special Board of Selectmen's Meeting May 27, 2010.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

While Mr. Freda was waiting for the audio visual to connect for his presentation of the

Selectman's Overview he read the Resignation Letter of Pam Parella, Republican Registrar of Voters.

## **Selectman's Overview**

### Updates

- Fiscal Year Projection- as of June 3<sup>rd</sup> we look to be at a slight surplus of about \$50,000.
  - This is primarily driven by 2 things:
    - Debt restructure, we renegotiated \$5.2 million dollars worth of callable bonds saving about \$350,000 over 13 years. \$73,000 captured for this fiscal year
    - \$1.1million insurance refund from the Hartford, through reviewing claims for last four years on Worker's Compensation and General Liability
- Referendum date –June 15<sup>th</sup> – Mr. Freda asked the public to vote on the referendum and encouraged people to do so.
- Town Hearing –June 7<sup>th</sup> – Mr. Freda explained that the Public Budget Meeting will provide the residents with an opportunity to come out and voice their opinions and learn about the changes made to the revised budget.
- Proposing a budget that will be a reduction of almost \$2 million in expenditures from the previous budget
- Personnel Update
  - Pamela Parella – Mr. Freda restated Pamela's resignation and that Mr. Werner will be assuming her position effective June 7, 2010.
  - Building Official – Mr. Freda noted that this has now become a "personnel issue", and as a result of that, he cannot entertain any questions on this issue. It may go on for an additional few months, but he is unable to comment at this time because of the legal aspects of the case.
- New Grant Money - \$94,500 part of an energy grant
  - Solar Scoreboard at Bailey Field – going out to bid
  - 14 more traffic LED signals – energy efficiency savings
  - 440 free energy audits for homeowners – Approximately \$33,000 will be used toward 440 free energy audits. He is still undecided how the homeowners will be chosen. He is considering Seniors and perhaps low income homeowners. He explained the audit program.
- Public Works Garage re-sided and re-roofed the existing building
- New building will be started and completed in September
  - No cost on this project to the Town
- New Dance Floor on Green – a company in town has donated the brick so there will be no material costs to the Town.
- Vacant Land – Mr. Gibson brought many properties to our attention last month, and we have been looking at all the properties. We have a lot of vacant land that is being researched and he will be communicating with Mr. Gibson personally on the issue.
- Tax Liens- Possible source of revenue. Mr. Freda is looking to collect revenue by selling tax liens, where the companies that purchase will remediate the properties, develop the property, creating jobs in the process and adding incremental real estate value to the Town. Sees this as a vertically integrated set up.

- Universal Drive Paving Update- \$675,000 Project – now almost fully funded through federal government, we will have a very small amount that we have to subsidize.

### Economic Development

- New Businesses:
  - PC Richards
  - Longhorn Restaurant
  - Liberty Tax
  - Casa Fajita
  - Eastern Distributors
  - Barnett Book Store
- Lost Businesses:
  - Impact Printing
  - Hollywood Video
  - Tiki Golf
- May 20<sup>th</sup> Economic Development Breakfast meeting. About 100 businesses attended. Brought in speakers to bring value to the local businesses. Planning another meeting in October
- Northern Washington Avenue – slower than Mr. Freda anticipated, but it continues to be a major objective of his.
- Pratt and Whitney Site - working with several developers and businesses. He is very optimistic and he is not making excuses.
- The Next Few Months
  - Need to get through budget season
  - Reconcile legal issues
  - A high emphasis on economic development and spending even more time in this area
  - Continue to communicate with the public

Mr. Freda expressed his thanks for the last six months, he appreciates the public's attendance and also that they are viewing the meetings on NHTV. He knows that we are facing challenges, however, with challenges come opportunities and with problems come solutions. He truly believes that the future is still very bright!

### **Correspondence** - none

Mr. Doheny read the following Call for a Public Hearing, concerning programs to be submitted for approval under the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act, to be held on Wednesday, June 16, 2010 at 5:45 p.m., in the North Haven Memorial Town Hall, Conference Room #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Mr. Freda then provided an explanation for the public by reading the following description of The Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program.

The Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program provides a tax credit to business firms that make cash investments in qualifying community programs conducted by tax exempt or municipal agencies. Businesses can receive a credit of 60% of their approved contribution or 100% in the case of certain energy conservation programs approved by the Department of Revenue Services. The program must be presented at a public hearing and approved at a town meeting,

before getting approval by the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.

The deadline to submit applications is June 4, 2010. We have received an application this year from the Lancraft Fife & Drum Corps. They have participated in this program for a number of years. The Town of North Haven has also submitted an application through the Department of Community Services and Recreation for two projects. 1. reconditioning of rooms in our recreation center and 2.) replacing the recreation center pool's hot water tank.

Mr. Fontana then read the following Call for a Special Town Meeting, concerning programs to be submitted for approval under the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act, to be held on Wednesday, June 16, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the North Haven Memorial Town Hall, Conference Room #1, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, immediately following the Public Hearing, but not before 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Freda asked if there was any additional discussion. Being none, Mr. Freda continued with the agenda. Mr. Freda stated that the following dates have been selected for the 2011 Board of Selectmen's meetings – Unless otherwise indicated, they will be held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the North Haven Memorial Library Community Room – January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1.

### **Resignations/Appointments**

- Resignation of Thomas R. Dunham, 40 Millbrook Road, from the Economic Development Commission term to expire December 31, 2011.

Mr. Freda noted that he has enjoyed working with all of the members of the Economic Development Commission. He also noted that he has given Mr. Fontana the opportunity to suggest a candidate to replace Mr. Dunham's seat on the Commission.

Mr. Doheny noted that he worked with Mr. Dunham and he felt he was a wonderful member, and he is sure that he will be missed after 35 years of participation.

Mr. Fontana motioned to accept the resignation of Mr. Thomas Dunham.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

- Reappointment of Anthony Rescigno as North Haven's representative to the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District's Representative Policy Board term to expire June 30, 2013.

Mr. Doheny motioned to accept the reappointment of Anthony Rescigno.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

- Appointment of Elio Floriano, 7 Lucy Court, North Haven, CT 06473, as acting Building Official for a period not to exceed 180 days.

Mr. Doheny motioned to approve the appointment of Elio Floriano.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

### **Property Tax Refunds**

- Aprati, Jonathon, 1 Upper State Street, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$41.71, and in the amount of \$247.20

- Cab East LLC, PO box 105704, Atlanta, GA 30348 in the amount of \$20.92
- H B Group Inc, 60 Dodge Avenue, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$144.88
- Honda Lease Trust, 600 Kelly Way Holyoke, MA 01040-9681, in the amount of \$210.38
- Nissan Infiniti LT, Box 254648, Sacramento, CA 95865, in the amount of \$167.25
- Penske Truck Leasing, RT 10 Green Hills, Reading, PA 19603-0405, in the amount of \$316.63, and in the amount of \$430.79
- Roach, Caleb, 107 Preston Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450, in the amount of \$208.00, and in the amount of \$ 192.28, and in the amount of \$ 209.48, and in the amount of \$ 152.00
- Transport International Pool, 530 East Swedesford Road, Wayne, PA 19087, in the amount of \$124.14

Mr. Fontana motioned to accept the Property Tax Refunds as presented.

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes

Mr. Freda announced the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen – Thursday, July 1, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library Community Room.

### **Public Comment**

Gary Amato, 27 Pool Road, expressed his disappointment that questions pertaining to the Building Inspector could not be answered. He was also disappointed that the Town Attorney was not present. Mr. Freda explained that it is a personnel issue and he will not put the Town of North Haven into a potential lawsuit by answering questions that are related to a personnel issue which is still under State and internal investigation. Mr. Amato asked if the forensic audit would be made available to the public. Mr. Freda said that most documents in municipal government are available through the Freedom of Information Act, unless there is a legal reason otherwise.

Mr. Amato asked about using Kostin and Ruffkess for the audit. He noted some years back that he thought there was someone from that company was married to a person on the Board of Education. He asked if before engaging the firm he had talked with anyone about this. Mr. Freda stated that this is the first he has heard of this, he has no knowledge of any relationship or conflict of interest, and that we do not make decisions based on relationships, but rather business decisions that are based on what is good for the Town of North Haven.

Mr. Amato asked if Mr. Freda ever checked into the will of Mr. Stiles regarding the cemetery property. Mr. Freda responded that the will has not been looked into. However, that adjoining property has been earmarked for future use, and if that reaches capacity there is additional property that can be utilized, therefore he sees no reason to investigate the last will and testament of Mr. Stiles. Mr. Amato stated that he felt just morally and ethically it would be the right thing to do. Mr. Freda asked for a show of hands if they audience felt it should be looked into. The majority did not.

Mr. Andrew Vallombroso, a Madison resident who is a contractor and does quite a bit of work in the Town, and also had a business here for about 15 years. He remarked that about six months he alerted Mr. Freda to events and problems that were occurring in the Building Official's Office that were personal to him and his family. He thanked Mr. Freda for bringing it to the next level and to where it is now. He noted that it had been mentioned that he had no credibility. He has a lot of family and friends in town and has been assisting the Town with his input. He noted that he is now a licensed, certified Building Inspector for the State of Connecticut. He asked if Mr. Freda's opinion regarding his credibility has changed since six months ago. Mr. Freda apologized and said he never meant to say or imply that he had no credibility.

Mr. Vallombroso stated that based on what he learned in his certification classes he has seen things in the department that have been very troublesome. He hopes nothing will get swept under the rug. He also stated that there have been violations of Connecticut State Statutes.

Mr. Sherman Katz, Sherwood Drive, stated that he has been approached by many people who have asked about the taxes being frozen for the residents of Todd Drive. The question is was it done legally? Mr. Freda explained that anyone can contest a revaluation. The procedure is there is a Board of Assessment Appeals with five individuals who hear appeals. In North Haven there were approximately 400 appeals. Any one can go before the Board, as did the residents of Todd Drive.

Mr. Katz asked if they were the only ones who were granted approval of their appeal. Mr. Freda stated that he does not know the numbers but can assure him that there were people who were declined, some who received modest reductions, and others who remained the same.

Mr. Katz asked about the call for the Town Budget Meeting regarding people that are eligible to speak that they must be taxpayers, and eligible voters. He thinks that in the past there have been people allowed to speak that were neither, and will the moderator make sure that anyone who gets up to speak is eligible to do so. Mr. Freda replied that is a good question, and that it had come up in his office. Mr. Freda stated that he was checking into whether an employee of the Town would be eligible to speak. Mr. Katz felt his understanding was they were not.

Mr. Katz asked about the Indian Ridge project and if the 300 plus units get approved, what kind of impact will this have on our school system and have any studies been done? Mr. Freda responded not to his knowledge, but it will have an impact. He does not know what the numbers are yet, but it is certain to impact the school system.

Mr. Katz noted that he feels that the door in the Community Services Room does not qualify as a legal Exit. He would like it checked into before the next use of the building, because it does not have a panic bolt. Mr. Freda thanked Mr. Katz.

Mr. Chris Peterson, 100 State Street, asked if Pam Parella's resignation was related at all to the investigation by the SEEC? Mr. Freda replied not to his knowledge.

Ms. Parella stated that it was purely a personal choice, and thanked the public for the honor to serve.

Mr. Peterson noted that there were no comments made from the Board thanking her for her service. Mr. Freda thanked Mr. Peterson for making the point, and stated that if he had been neglectful he wanted to thank Pam for her service and that on behalf of the Town of North Haven we appreciate her time and effort.

Mr. Roland Gibson, Highland Park Road, noted that he read a good article by Mr. Peterson about how to trim the budget which made a lot of sense. One of the suggestions was the amount paid for the police and firemen to work out, and why can't they utilize the North Haven Health and Racquet Club for a nominal fee. He feels that the amount of benefits paid to employees is out of line and must stop when the contracts are negotiable.

Mr. Gibson noted that on the vacant land, there were almost 50 properties with a value of almost \$10 - \$15 million dollars. Mr. Freda noted that it is a time consuming project and that Jonathan Bodwell, the Town Engineer is working on it.

Mr. William Pantalone, 98 Samoset Avenue, had a number of issues that he took exception to including Upper State Street developed in the 1950's on a flood plain, Valley Service Road that goes no where, too many employees on the budget listed under personnel for the Library, the pool is costing a lot of money to run and now it needs a roof. He went on to say that there is only a small minority of people that use the pool for what it costs to maintain, and he can't understand why residents have to pay to use it. The transfer station costs over \$500,000 to operate, but we should be getting money for the scrap that is turned in. He feels there is a lot fat in the budget. He takes exception to the Police and Fire Departments and the amount of paid days off they have, and the amount of overtime. He wants to know where are the fires? He feels that public works has a lot of overlap and it is out of control.

Phyllis Kaercher, 5 Tennyson Avenue, talked about her experiences over the years with the leaves and trees in Town and in particular on her property. She does not feel it is possible to bag the amount of leaves from the 28 trees on her property. She feels it would be upwards of 200 bags. She also does not think that it is feasible to have students assisting with leaf bagging because primarily it will be a liability issue. She noted that she has neighboring property that has not been raked in several years and looks awful and that is what will happen all over our Town. She feels very strongly about having the leaf program remain.

Mr. Freda noted that we have had many phone calls in the Selectman's office regarding the leaf program and he is listening to the people. He also noted that we had presented a budget that had no reduction in services. That budget was voted down two to one. That precipitated us to go back to the drawing board and what we heard from the public was that they wanted reductions. We are trying to balance all perspectives; we are currently rethinking it, and will have a decision at the Town Budget Meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Henry Konapacke, 392 Quinnipiac Avenue, expressed his concerns over the North

Haven Racquet Club being on ancient burial grounds, and feels this is in violation of the Connecticut State Statutes. He also would like to see the flags in the cemetery in holders to keep them standing straight. Mr. Freda mentioned that he has had many conversations with Mr. Konapacke and is presently working on the issue of the flag holders as per Mr. Konapacke's recommendation.

Jennie Caldwell, Kimberly Circle, asked if at the Budget meeting, will the public know exactly what items and services are being cut from the budget? Mr. Freda responded that on the Town side, we will be identifying those items. She then asked if he has any indication from the public via their phone calls and comments as to why they voted yes or no for the budget. Mr. Freda responded that the comments have been varied and it is difficult to say. There are many opinions, and the public is asking questions. He did note that of the many calls, there have been very few regarding the change in bulk trash pick up from weekly to bi-annually. Mr. Freda also expressed his disappointment in the fact that the Town has been taken advantage of in this regard because many people have brought their bulk items in from neighboring towns.

Ms. Caldwell asked if there would ever be questions on the ballot regarding whether a person agrees or disagrees with the budget in terms Town vs. Board of Ed and whether either is too high or low. Mr. Freda stated that he has been advised not to do that because it would not be good for the Town of North Haven. It might indicate a polarization of the town. He feels that it would be very unhealthy to fragment the Town by having one demographic versus the other. He is trying to galvanize the Town and bring people together rather than bifurcate North Haven.

Ms. Caldwell is upset with the way the transfer station passes are being handled. She has a small energy efficient car and can not fit much in it. She stated that it is not fair that because she may have to make multiple trips using multiple tickets to bring her yard waste, another individual with a pick up truck or large vehicle will only use one trip or ticket. Mr. Freda responded that he did get the message from Ms. Caldwell earlier in the day and has already spoken with the Public Works Department. He stated that he would be working to address the problem.

Florence Sinow, Maple Avenue, expressed her pride for the Town of North Haven and also her sadness for losing some of the amenities we have enjoyed. She knows that we are the envy of other towns. She asked if when we lose these amenities, we can look forward to a time when we can restore them. If she knew that was possible it would make her feel much better.

Gary Amato, Pool Road, asked if Mr. Freda had the answer to the question he asked at the last meeting regarding the sick and vacation time Ms. Querfeld would be receiving. Mr. Freda responded that he was still unsure.

Mr. Amato asked if regarding the forensic audit, how far back is it going. Mr. Freda replied to 2003, and later corrected himself to answer 2002. Mr. Amato then asked if Mr. Floriano's 180 day term had anything to do with Mr. Maiden's retirement. Mr. Freda responded no. Mr. Amato asked when Mr. Maiden would be retiring and could Mr. Freda get that information for the next meeting.



Mr. Chris Peterson, 100 State Street, spoke regarding the physical fitness program for the Police and Fire Departments. He feels that we are spending about \$88,000 alone for these programs and wondered what this was comprised of. If just a gym membership, then he felt that memberships to North Haven Health and Racquet would cost about \$6,000 a year versus the \$88,000. He thinks modifications such as those could help to reduce the budget and asked if they are being discussed? Mr. Freda stated that those types of discussions have to happen through the collective bargaining process. We are not in a collective bargaining process right now. Mr. Doheny noted that he thinks that the Police Department members get paid for the time and that is a portion of the expense that perhaps Mr. Peterson is not including.

Roland Gibson, asked if we could get a bid from a vacuum truck company to reduce the steps involved in the leaf program. Ms. Lynn Sadosky, Director of Public Works, responded that we do use vacuum trucks; however, we only have three of them. She would have to look into leasing or renting additional vacuum trucks. She said that we run 10 crews all day and it is a huge effort. She would have to do an analysis. He asked where the leaves are taken. Ms. Sadosky advised they are contracted to take to Borelli Farm.

Mr. Freda asked if there were any more questions, hearing none and seeing none, he thanked everyone for attending.

Mr. Freda motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm

Voted: Freda – yes, Doheny – yes, Fontana – yes